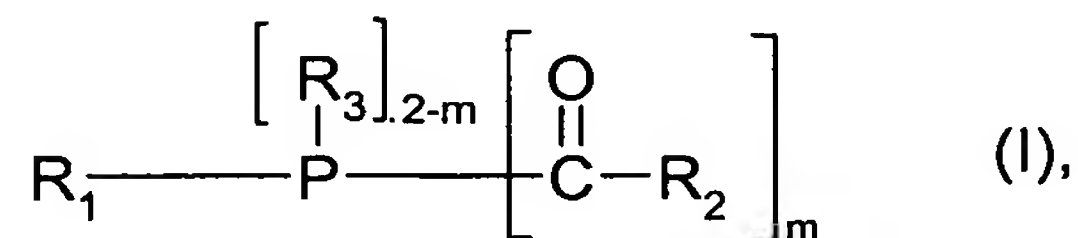


IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A process for the preparation of acylphosphines of formula (I)



wherein

m is 1 or 2;

R₁ is C₁-C₁₈ alkyl, C₂-C₁₈ alkyl which is interrupted by one or several non-successive O atoms, phenyl substituted C₁-C₄ alkyl, C₂-C₈ alkenyl, phenyl, naphthyl, biphenyl, C₅-C₁₂ cycloalkyl or a 5- or 6-membered O-, S- or N containing heterocyclic ring, the radicals phenyl, naphthyl, biphenyl, C₅-C₁₂ cycloalkyl or the 5- or 6-membered O-, S- or N-containing heterocyclic ring being unsubstituted or substituted by one to five halogen, C₁-C₈ alkyl, C₁-C₈ alkylthio and/or C₁-C₈ alkoxy;

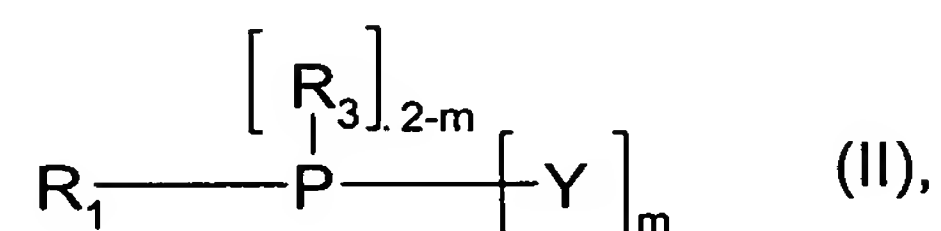
R₂ is C₁-C₁₈ alkyl, C₃-C₁₂ cycloalkyl, C₂-C₁₈ alkenyl, phenyl, naphthyl, biphenyl or a 5- or 6-membered O-, S- or N-containing heterocyclic ring, the radicals phenyl, naphthyl, biphenyl or 5- or 6-membered O-, S- or N-containing heterocyclic ring being unsubstituted or substituted by one to four C₁-C₈ alkyl, C₁-C₈ alkoxy, C₁-C₈ alkylthio and/or halogen;

R₃ is C₁-C₁₈ alkyl, C₂-C₁₈ alkyl which is interrupted by one or several non-successive O atoms; phenyl substituted C₁-C₄ alkyl, C₂-C₈ alkenyl, phenyl, naphthyl, biphenyl, C₅-C₁₂-cycloalkyl or a 5- or 6-membered O-, S- or N containing heterocyclic ring, the radicals phenyl, naphthyl, biphenyl, C₅-C₁₂ cycloalkyl or the 5- or 6-membered O-, S- or N-

containing heterocyclic ring being unsubstituted or substituted by one to five halogen, C₁-C₁₈ alkyl, C₁-C₈ alkylthio and/or C₁-C₈ alkoxy;

[[by]] comprising

(1) reacting organic phosphorus halides of formula (II)

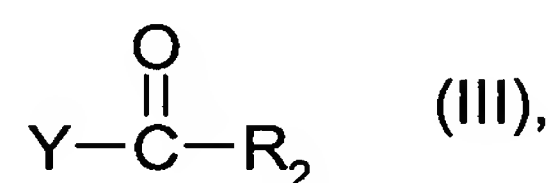


wherein R₁, R₃ and m have the meaning cited above;

and Y is Br or Cl,

with sodium in a solvent in the presence of an activator, wherein sodium is pre-sent in the form of a dispersion of sodium particles having a mean particle size of $\leq 500 \mu\text{m}$ in the solvent,

(2) subsequent reaction with acid halides of formula (III)



wherein R₂ and Y have the meaning cited above;

which process is carried out without isolation of the intermediates.

Claim 2 (Original): The process according to claim 1, wherein R₁, R₂ and R₃ are independently from each other phenyl, naphthyl and biphenyl, being unsubstituted or substituted by one to five halogen, C₁-C₈ alky and/or C₁-C₈ alkoxy.

Claim 3 (Original): The process according to claim 2, wherein R₁ and R₃ are phenyl and R₂ is 2,4,6-trimethylphenyl.

Claim 4 (Currently Amended): The process according to claim 1 ~~any one of claims 1 to 3~~, wherein the activator is chlorobenzene, ~~and/or n-butanol~~, or a combination thereof.

Claim 5 (Currently Amended): The process according to claim 1 ~~any one of claims 1 to 4~~, wherein the ~~alkali metal~~ sodium is dispersed in the solvent by means of a high speed turbine stirrer.

Claim 6 (Currently Amended): ~~A process~~ The process according to claim 1 ~~to any one of claims 1 to 5~~, wherein from 4 to 8 atom equivalents of the ~~alkali metal~~ sodium are used for the preparation of compounds of formula (I), wherein m is 2, and 2 to 4 atom equivalents of the alkali metal are used for the preparation of compounds of formula (I), wherein m is 1.

Claim 7 (Currently Amended): ~~A process~~ The process according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 6~~ claim 1, wherein the reaction (1) of the organic phosphorus halides (II) with the sodium ~~an alkali metal~~ is carried out ~~in the~~ at a temperature ~~range of~~ from -20° to +160°C.

Claim 8 (Currently Amended): ~~A process~~ The process according to claim 1 ~~any one of claims 1 to 7~~, wherein the reaction (2) of the metallised phosphine with the acid chloride (III) is carried out at a temperature of from -20° to +120°C.

Claim 9 (Currently Amended): ~~A process~~ The process according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 8~~ claim 1, wherein ~~the reaction steps~~ (1) and (2) are carried out in toluene, or ethyl benzene, or a combination thereof, as solvent.

Claim 10 (New): The process according to claim 2, wherein the activator is chlorobenzene, n-butanol, or a combination thereof.

Claim 11 (New): The process according to claim 3, wherein the activator is chlorobenzene, n-butanol, or a combination thereof.

Claim 12 (New): The process according to claim 2, wherein the sodium is dispersed in the solvent by means of a high speed turbine stirrer.

Claim 13 (New): The process according to claim 3, wherein the sodium is dispersed in the solvent by means of a high speed turbine stirrer.

Claim 14 (New): The process according to claim 4, wherein the sodium is dispersed in the solvent by means of a high speed turbine stirrer.

Claim 15 (New): The process according to claim 2, wherein from 4 to 8 atom equivalents of the sodium are used for the preparation of compounds of formula (I), wherein m is 2, and 2 to 4 atom equivalents of the alkali metal are used for the preparation of compounds of formula (I), wherein m is 1.

Claim 16 (New): The process according to claim 3, wherein from 4 to 8 atom equivalents of the sodium are used for the preparation of compounds of formula (I), wherein m is 2, and 2 to 4 atom equivalents of the alkali metal are used for the preparation of compounds of formula (I), wherein m is 1.

Claim 17 (New): The process according to claim 4, wherein from 4 to 8 atom equivalents of the sodium are used for the preparation of compounds of formula (I), wherein m is 2, and 2 to 4 atom equivalents of the alkali metal are used for the preparation of compounds of formula (I), wherein m is 1.

Claim 18 (New): The process according to claim 5, wherein from 4 to 8 atom equivalents of the sodium are used for the preparation of compounds of formula (I), wherein m is 2, and 2 to 4 atom equivalents of the alkali metal are used for the preparation of compounds of formula (I), wherein m is 1.

Claim 19 (New): The process according to claim 2, wherein the reaction (1) of the organic phosphorus halides (II) with the sodium is carried out at a temperature of from -20° to +160°C.

Claim 20 (New): The process according to claim 3, wherein the reaction (1) of the organic phosphorus halides (II) with the sodium is carried out at a temperature of from -20° to +160°C.